

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. – 16. (Cancelled)

17. (Previously Presented) A method for a transportation carrier to maintain sufficient quantities of dry bulk materials at a remote manufacturing site comprising:

- generating a first signal representative of an existing dry bulk material quantity at a remote site;

- transmitting a second signal corresponding to said first signal, from said remote site to at least one of a local computer and a central computer at predetermined time intervals;

- determining said existing dry bulk material quantity and projected material usage rate for said existing dry bulk material quantity based on said transmitted signals;

- automatically ordering additional dry bulk materials from a preselected vendor by said at least one of a local computer and a central computer based on said existing material quantity and said projected material usage rate;

automatically directing a transport vehicle to deliver said additional dry bulk material from said preselected vendor to said manufacturing site; and  
transporting said additional dry bulk material from said preselected vendor to said manufacturing site,  
whereby additional dry bulk material is supplied to said manufacturing site before said existing dry bulk material is depleted.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 17 further comprising:

displaying at least one of said determined existing material quantity and said projected usage rate on said central computer.

19. (Previously Presented) A method for a transportation carrier to maintain sufficient quantities of dry bulk materials at a remote manufacturing site comprising:

generating a first signal representative of an existing dry bulk material quantity at a remote site;

transmitting a second signal corresponding to said first signal, from said remote site to at least one of a local computer and a central computer at predetermined time intervals;

determining said existing dry bulk material quantity and projected material usage rate for said existing dry bulk material quantity based on said transmitted signals;

automatically ordering additional dry bulk materials from a preselected vendor by said at least one of a local computer and a central computer based on said existing material quantity and said projected material usage rate;

automatically directing a transport vehicle to deliver said additional dry bulk material from said preselected vendor to said manufacturing site; and

transporting said additional dry bulk material from said preselected vendor to said manufacturing site,

whereby additional dry bulk material is supplied to said manufacturing site before said existing dry bulk material is depleted; and

producing at least one of an audible and a visual alarm, via said central computer, if said material level falls below a predetermined level.

20. (Previously Presented) A method for a transportation carrier to maintain sufficient quantities of dry bulk materials at a remote manufacturing site comprising:

generating a first signal representative of an existing dry bulk material quantity at a remote site using one of an ultrasonic and a strain gauge detector to generate said first signal;

transmitting a second signal corresponding to said first signal, from said remote site to at least one of a local computer and a central computer at predetermined time intervals;

determining said existing dry bulk material quantity and projected material usage rate for said existing dry bulk material quantity based on said transmitted signals;

automatically ordering additional dry bulk materials from a preselected vendor by said at least one of a local computer and a central computer based on said existing material quantity and said projected material usage rate;

automatically directing a transport vehicle to deliver said additional dry bulk material from said preselected vendor to said manufacturing site; and

transporting said additional dry bulk material from said preselected vendor to said manufacturing site,

whereby additional dry bulk material is supplied to said manufacturing site before said existing dry bulk material is depleted.

21. (Canceled)